Northampton August 13th 1838

Dear Friend,

I received your interesting letter by the Philadelphians with great pleasure. By a series of unfortunate mischances we saw very little of the travellers, though we were eager to do so, and took great pains to effect it. When a Quaker has a soul, what large ones they have! Pity that a sect founded on such high and broad principles should be buried in the mere shell of lifeless forms! But when they are free, like the friends that brought your letter, they are free indeed.

I rejoice to hear how pleasantly you are situated. Being deprived of the "sympathy and popularity to which I had been accustomed" has likewise rested on my spirit like an invisible incubus, and I knew not what it was that impeded my utterance. When I first came here, "the upper circles" were decidedly disposed to patronise me. I made use of my position to place the anti-slavery lever, and I think I can already discern symptoms that I shall eventually go to Coventry. It is a healthy, bracing place, that same Coventry, and particularly well calculated to preserve strength of vision.

A week ago, we visited our brother at Springfield. My sister, who really has much natural kindness and integrity, imbibed nothing but aristocratic influences from the hour of her birth to the day of her marriage. Whenever I see her, she receives a slight impulse toward abolition, and falls gently back upon her velvet cushions long before I have an opportunity

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to see her again. With her I found it necessary to do battle for Mrs. Chapman. Sarah T. Smith, the Moral Reform woman, who attended the Philadelphia Convention, told her that Mrs. Chapman was in the Insane Hospital, because at the Convention a majority opposed certain views of hers, and she could not carry her point. I have on the stocks a letter to Sarah T. Smith, in which I shall very kindly try to convince her that her statements are erroneous, and somewhat rashly made. Our private opinion is that she received her information from "one of the round substances"; but of this I say nothing. What Dr. Osgood is it whose name you mark with two notes of admiration? There is a Calvinistic minister by the name of Osgood in Springfield, who ~~is~~ my sister says "injures the abolition cause by his imprudence; being a man that goes to the extreme in everything." Such evidence, from such a source, of course led us to the conclusion that he was a man after our own hearts.

Sarah T. Smith said she merely repeated what she had heard.

You say you shall always think I failed to follow the leadings of Providence, in not going to the Convention. I can only reply that I saw no such leadings; perhaps my mind was not in a state so quiescent as to be willing to perceive them. The plain fact is, I never did enter with a free and cordial spirit into Societies and Conventions. Their machinery oppresses me. I want to say what the Spirit moves, and when it moves.

I am sorry to see that another Woman's Convention is to be held. I was in hopes Abby Kelly had settled all that for us on better ground.

I beg of you not to publish my last letter; and I ask it for manifold

reasons. One is, that the colored woman is in a delicate and embarrassed position. By right she ought, even in the legal sense, to be free; and she thinks herself so; but on account of informal-ities we fear she is in the power of oppressors. She opens her heart fully to me; and oh, what a tissue of meanness and false-hood her disclosures reveal! I have been dropped into the midst of this tangled skein in a strange way. What will come of it, I know not. My straight-forward way of proceeding has done better than the most adroitly planned ruse de guerre to confound all their schemes for gulling the credulity of the North. I wish I could tell you some of the odd crooks and turns in this affair; but it takes so long on paper!

Do not distrust yourself about what you wrote of Susan Paul. I shall mention it to no one; and though I felt sorry for her want of delicacy and consideration, I shall not let it have any unjust influence on my estimate of her. She ought not to pass with me, or any one else, for more than she is worth, you know. This trite saying reminds me of certain truisms of mine concerning the persecutions of your sister being what the noble-minded must always expect &c. I did not utter those sagacious observations because I supposed a woman of your strong character needed to have them repeated; but I spoke what every observing mind feels and knows, just as we remind the Christian mourner of the most common consolations of religion, because there seems nothing new to be said on such occasions.

Have you read Carlyle's Miscellanies? They are full of rare and racy things, and there is a delightful tone of magnanim-ity and candour pervading them all.

Speaking of magnanimity, I would our friend Oliver Johnson (whom you know I really like in the main) had more of it. Why cannot he rise more serenely above the dirty and dingy atmosphere of personalities?

If Hatteck (junior editor of Stone) desecrates the principles of abolition, or any other great principles, lay his fault before him & the world with Christian boldness; but why circulate gossip about his domestic or personal affairs, such as his being angry concerning his wife's conversion? Brother Oliver does not appear to me always to give his hard knocks in a good spirit. I sometimes feel in a similar state of mind myself; but I soon hear the monitory voice, "It is not good to be here. Arise, let us go hence."

L. M. Child

Aug 1838

Lydia Maria Child

Miss Caroline Weston.
Roxbury.
Care of Mr. H. G. Chapman.
Henry Chapman & Co.

MVS. A. 5.1 no. 39

Will you procure one of my printed addresses to the Senators & Representatives, do it up with the enclosed letter, and send it to the old patriot, by Edmund Quincy jr.?

I must hasten to say good bye; for company waits in the parlour. God bless you.

Yrs most truly,
L. M. C.